

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20  
IO-14 /091 W

-----105941 171323Z /41

R 161639Z JUN 78  
FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4316  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
CONGENS POUCH

UNCLAS VANCOUVER 0805

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTIONS TO PM TRUDEAU S CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

1. BOTH VANCOUVER SUN AND PROVINCE RAN LEAD EDITORIALS ON JUNE 14 ON PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU S CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROPOSALS. EDITORIAL REACTION WAS LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC. REVIEWING PAST ATTEMPTS AT REFORM, SUN BELIEVES THAT PRESENT PROSPECT FOR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON WHETHER TRUDEAU "WILL SETTLE THIS TIME FOR HALF A LOAF", E.G. SOME BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN AREAS OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION (SUPREME COURT, SENATE, BILL OF RIGHTS) WHETHER OR NOT THE PROVINCES AGREE TO FULL REFORM. ON OTHER HAND, IF OTTAWA INSISTS ON APPROVAL BY THE PROVINCES OF SUCH MATTERS AS A NEW DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS AND AN AGREED FORMULA FOR AMENDING THE BNA, THEN THE EFFORT "IS ALMOST GUARANTEED (ITALICIZED) TO FAIL AS LONG AS RENE LEVESQUE OR A SUCCESSOR HEADS A SEPARATIST GOVERNMENT IN QUEBEC AND IT MAY FAIL EVEN IF A SUCCESSOR HEADS A FEDERALIST GOVERNMENT IN QUEBEC".

2. VANCOUVER PROVINCE EDITORIAL THEME IS CLEAR FROM ITS CAPTION: "CONSTITUTIONAL FIDDLING". EDITORIAL STATES THAT "A LOT OF CANADIANS"

WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN "UNUSUAL AGREEMENT" WITH LEVESQUE WHO  
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DESCRIBED TRUDEAU S PROPOSALS AS "PURELY COSMETIC AND PROFOUNDLY INSIGNIFICANT". PROVINCE STATES THAT "EVEN IF YOU ACCEPT THE VIEW THAT SOME CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ARE NECESSARY, MR. TRUDEAU IS WRONG IN HIS FOCUS AND APPROACH" BECAUSE YOU CAN "NOT SIMPLY TINKER WITH FRINGE MATTERS". EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT "YOU CAN T EXPECT INNOVATIVE THINKING ON THE CONSTITUTION FROM A SITTING

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT" AND "IF WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM EXCLUSIVELY TO THE POLITICIANS, WE MIGHT AS WELL NOT BOTHER."

3. IN JUNE 13 NEWS ITEM, PREMIER BENNETT REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED "GUARDED OPTIMISM" THAT THE REFORM PROPOSALS WILL RESULT IN CHANGES CALLED FOR BY B.C. HE DECLINED TO COMMENT FURTHER PENDING MORE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FROM OTTAWA AND DISCUSSIONS SCHEDULED AT A PREMIERS MEETING IN AUGUST AND AT A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FIRST MINISTERS MEETING IN SEPTEMBER.

4. CLIPPINGS BEING MAILED TO EMBASSY AND EUR/CAN.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, PRIME MINISTER, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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